

Focus On:

DIRECT ACCESS HOSTEL PROVISION

Summary of issues:

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1. Plymouth's direct access hostels (The Gates and The SHIP) are currently located in buildings which cannot be adapted to comply with Disability Discrimination Act legislation and therefore new premises must be found.
2. The buildings inhibit positive and proactive work with service users, a high proportion of whom are revolving door service users who are difficult to engage.
3. The re-structuring and subsequent recruitment of staff at The SHIP Hostel has, as far as is possible within current premises, enhanced proactive support working, and work continues to improve the quality of the service.
4. In order to respond to the 'Places of Change' Hostels for the Homelessness agenda, capital funding is required to resource the building of a new hostel.
5. A fully consulted review of direct access provision has been carried out and identified specific needs and concerns.
6. A major gap in services has been identified in relation to direct access hostel provision for 16/17 year olds – and this has been incorporated into the design of the new hostel.

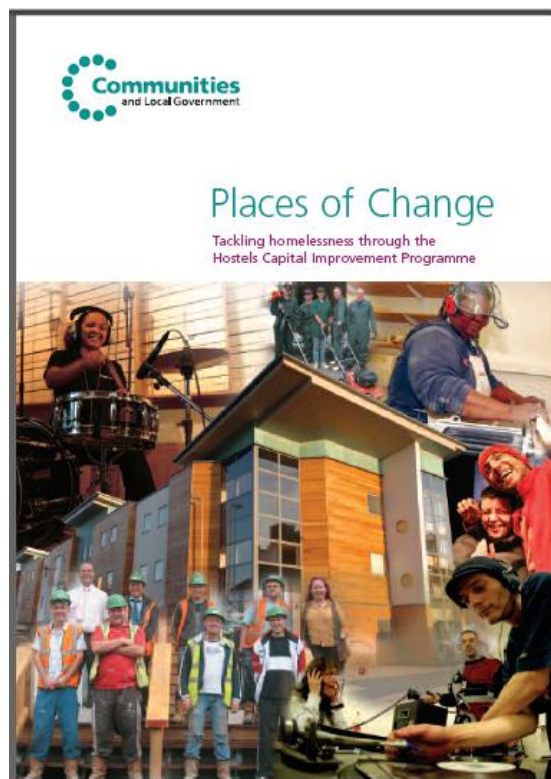
Needs information highlighted at a national level:

Traditional hostels are ineffective as 'places of change':

Too many people are staying in the hostel system for too long. Poor physical conditions and services that don't motivate people to address their needs can reinforce rather than break the cycle of homelessness. Also many more people have been leaving hostels for negative reasons - like eviction or abandonment - than for positive ones - like finding employment and a settled home. We want to change this.

(Source: *Places of Change, Tackling Homelessness through the Hostels Capital Improvement Programme, 2006*).

Further information about the 'Places of Change' programme can be obtained by clicking the picture or link below:



<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/152564>

Needs information highlighted at a local level:

Plymouth has responded to the Places of Change agenda by:

- Carrying out a full re-structuring and re-recruitment within the SHIP Hostel, with an emphasis on positive and proactive support working.
- Carrying out a full service user and stakeholder consultation, leading to a report containing recommendations for an application of capital funding through the programme to respond to need,

to improve dramatically the quality of services on offer, and to respond to the pressing need to move the current direct access hostels (Shekinah Mission's Gateway and The SHIP Hostel) elsewhere in order to meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements by 2010.

The full report forms part of this Homelessness Review and is reproduced in full below:

Needs analysis and consultation recommendations with regard to Homelessness Hostel provision in Plymouth.

Summary of needs and consultation responses:

- Data indicates that an increase in capacity is likely to be needed either within the direct access hostel, or at Stage 2 supported accommodation stage – to increase proportion of residents who achieve successful move on.
- The audit of available supported accommodation available to enable hostel residents to move on agencies points to a shortfall of accommodation for homeless people. At current levels of provision and access, an additional 121 homeless people per annum would need to be supported to access supported housing/permanent settled housing within the six weeks period of their stay.
- The hostel provision forms an integral part of the efforts to reduce rough sleeping in the city, with an average of 6 rough sleepers per month supported to move off the street.
- Needs analysis has highlighted a serious shortage of appropriate direct access/emergency accommodation for 16/17 year olds – and consultation has highlighted that with appropriate multi-disciplinary supported provision, this need could be addressed within the hostel. Estimates for level of provision should be clarified in further discussion with relevant agencies about the potential uses of this resource (e.g. to reduce use of bed and breakfast accommodation).
- There is consensus that night shelter and Hostel should be located within the same building, but with clear distinctions regarding levels of need and support provided to service users within each area.
- Hostel should be capable of flexible use in order to safeguard residents who are vulnerable from other residents, and to afford residents maximum ability to progress.
- The design of the hostel should reflect a more aspirational approach to supporting homeless people to work towards independence.

Review of current needs in relation to Hostel Provision:

For ease of reference, the review of needs has been split into two parts: The need for direct access hostel provision for 16/17 year olds, and the needs in relation to the broader homelessness community.

1. 16/17 year olds in need of direct access hostel provision:

It is anticipated that the following needs might result in a 16/17 year old requiring access to emergency hostel accommodation:

- Young person found intentionally homeless following eviction from temporary accommodation/supported housing or lodgings.
- Young people for whom there is a period of waiting before appropriate accommodation can be accessed e.g. Foyer, Supported Housing.

- Those who have been evicted by their parents and need somewhere to stay for a short period while preventative work/mediation takes place to support young person to return home where this is appropriate.
- To prevent custodial remands – or as a place to go on release from custody.
- Young people with support needs so high that they are excluded from a variety of resources including School, Supported Accommodation, but are not considered eligible for Social Services/Health/Housing support.
- Young people who have made a homeless approach, and for whom the Hostel is more appropriate than temporary accommodation whilst awaiting a decision/settled accommodation.

Estimating numbers who are likely to access appropriate hostel accommodation is difficult because the numbers of young people currently rough sleeping can only be approximated, and evidence that young people are entering inappropriate and potentially abusive relationships simply to have access to accommodation, is anecdotal.

However, a realistic approximation can be gauged from information provided by The Zone (formerly Youth Enquiry Service) where pertinent figures are highlighted in red.

Data source YES (The Zone) Housing Needs Assessment statistics: Year ending March 2006

16/17 year olds presenting for first time with accommodation issue	403	%
16/17 year olds identified as in housing need	289	73
Total number of Housing Needs Assessments conducted	205	51
<u>Situation at time:-</u>		
Parents/carer no longer willing/able to accommodate	210	73
Young person not willing to return home	30	11
Eviction from supported/emergency accommodation	6	2
Other	43	14
<u>Slept last night :-</u>		
Rough sleeper	20	7
Parents/carer	72	25
Sofa surfing – peer friends/family	171	59
Custody/institution	2	1
Supported/emergency accommodation	21	7
Own tenancy	3	1
<u>Indicators of vulnerability:-</u>		
Experience of physical abuse	75	26
Experience of sexual abuse	5	2
Experience of neglect/emotional abuse	97	34
Parental substance misuse	31	11
Own substance misuse	18	6
History of offending	25	9
Mental health issues/Depression/Self harm	44	15
Learning disability/ADHD/Aspergers	35	12
Ethnic minority	3	1
Involvement with SS/Time spent in care	98	34
<u>What would they like?</u>		
To return home	34	12
Supported housing	161	56
Social housing	223	77
Support	88	30
<u>Recommendation:-</u>		
Emergency accommodation	98	34
Homeless approach	94	33
Return home/Other	94	33
Accommodated by Social Services	3	1
S/S Initial assessment requested	8	3

The data would indicate that around 20 16/17 year olds sought advice from The Zone after a period of rough sleeping, and that in addition there were 6 young people over the course of the year that were evicted from temporary accommodation (with this meaning that they would be considered 'intentionally homeless' – and would require appropriate accommodation. There is some anecdotal information that there have been significant reductions (estimated at around ¼ of former levels) in rough sleeping by young people as a result of a dedicated homelessness prevention approach by the City, but this cannot be confirmed through existing data.

There is also potential for an appropriate direct access accommodation, with support delivered through a multi-disciplinary approach, to be used in place of bed and breakfast accommodation – currently used only in an emergency by Youth Offending Team and Children’s Services. Details of Bed and Breakfast use by these agencies are sketchy, but Children’s Services alone estimated that they had an average of 1-4 young people aged between 16-18 years old in bed and breakfast at any one time (*Source: Scrutiny Report re. Young Persons Accommodation, September 2006*). Use of such a resource in place of bed and breakfast could therefore result in a significant saving for the City – as well as providing a more appropriate, youth focused resource.

Direct access provision for 16/17 year olds would require an appropriate multi-disciplinary response to be effective, to begin to address needs in relation to:

- o Substance Abuse.
- o Experience of physical, emotional and sexual abuse.
- o Offending behaviour.
- o Mental ill health.
- o Learning disability.

All of which are key areas of vulnerability of 16/17 year olds who become homeless (*Source: The Zone access to services data, 05/06; Specialist PCC Youth Homelessness Officer caseload analysis 06/07*).

It would also require the establishment of move on pathways into appropriate supported/settled accommodation would be important following a period to stabilise within the hostel (*Source: Stakeholder consultation event 13th April, 2007; Homelessness Forum 15th May 2007*).

Supported accommodation in Plymouth is well utilized, with little additional capacity to cope with increased access. This will be addressed through the Supporting People procurement of services for young people.

Addressing concerns about accommodating 16/17 year olds in general direct access hostel provision:

Due to concerns about the appropriateness of hostel provision for this age group, consultation has identified that the following provisions and safeguards would need to be in place:

- Accommodation capable of separation from main hostel, with secure access and appropriate levels of staffing.
- An identified and agreed move on process.
- Commitment from Children’s Social Services, Youth Offending Team, Young Persons Substance Abuse team, mental health services, with regard to appropriate joint assessment, consideration of move on accommodation options, and availability of support, to aid success of placement.
- Appropriately trained and skilled staff, together with age appropriate activities and support.

2. Current utilisation rates of direct access hostel services:

(Source: Supporting People Client Record Data, April – December 2006 **NB figures for 3 quarters of the year only illustrated**).

Service	Capacity	Utilisation Rate	HIGH/LOW rates for period in question	Throughput	Proportion of service users moved in a planned way.	HIGH/LOW proportion of planned moves in period
SHIP	28	93.6%	High 96.8% Low 91%	360%	49.6% (n=147 of the 301 total move ons)	High 62% Low 43%
GATES	10	88.5%	High 96% Low 83.5%	350%	50.3% (n=66 of the 98 total move ons)	High 79% Low 0%

Figures for this period show that both services were well utilised, but throughput is exceptionally high in the direct access hostels, with a high proportion of service users moving on in an unplanned way. Though there is little indication from these figures alone that capacity needs to be increased, further analysis of the data would indicate that an increase in capacity is advisable in order to secure higher rates of planned/successful move on, based on the following information:

- Only approximately half of all service users accessing these direct access provisions go on to make planned moves.
- Analysis of the Move On Project (which audited details of planned and unplanned move on from hostel accommodation) showed that approximately 47% (n=119) of unplanned moves from The Gates and The SHIP were evictions or abandonments – with these people being most likely to become the ‘revolving door’ service users who will at some point re-present to services.
- Analysis of the Move On Project (utilising the Homeless Link Move On Planning tool) also illustrates that where residents are moved on in a planned way, the vast majority (approximately 63%) of residents are directed to 2nd Stage hostels/supported accommodation.
- Current service re-modelling in relation to the SHIP is aimed at ensuring key working and support planning is of the highest quality – and an indicator of this success would be an increase in the rate of planned move on of residents. If this is the case, then a proportion of the people who currently leave hostels in an unplanned way would probably remain in the service, and need to be accommodated, either at the Direct Access stage, or Stage 2 hostels.
- If the proportion of service users moving on in a planned way was to be increased to 90% for both The Ship and The Gates, then an additional 123 and 22 move on places would be required respectively per annum (based on current access levels).
- Estimates of the future levels of need/access is difficult, as it is not known how many of the people who make unplanned moves are the same people, repeatedly accessing and re-accessing hostels in a chaotic way throughout the course of a year (so that appropriately accommodating these people would result in reduced levels of access).

Utilisation rates in 'Stage 2' move on hostel accommodation are also high, with very little additional capacity to accommodate additional service users (as illustrated in the table below).

Service	Capacity	Utilisation Rate	HIGH/ LOW rates for period in question	Throughput	Proportion of service users moved in a planned way.	HIGH/LOW proportion of planned moves in period
Devonport House	60	99.6%	High 100% Low 99%	153%	64% (n=81 from a total of 127 move ons)	High 71.4% Low 60.6%
Plymouth House	43	86.8%	High 90.9% Low 84.6%	110%	92.26% (n=26 from a total of 28 move ons)	High 100% Low 83%
Zion House	12	99.5%	High 100% Low 98%	115%	100% (n=7 from a total of 7 move ons)	High 100% Low 100%
Mon Abri	7	82.35%	High 92.3% Low 69.9%	121%	26.7% (n=4 from a total of 15 move ons)	High 50% Low 28.57%
Harwell Street	33	82.17%	High 91.2% Low 76.9%	104%	63.2% (n=16 from a total of 26 move ons)	High 100% Low 40%
Foyer	50	96.42%	High 98.9% Low 93.7%	116%	64.5% (n=27 from a total of 42 move ons)	High 81.8% Low 46%
Spare capacity? (under-utilisation of available capacity)	Based on average utilisation rate of 91.14 of 205 supported housing spaces, spare capacity can be estimated at only: 6 places per quarter.					

- The figures enable an approximate estimate of 124 additional hostel or second stage supported housing units to be required per annum (Additional planned move on from The Gates + Additional planned move on from The Ship – Under-utilisation in supported accommodation services).

A review of the options to increase the rate of planned/successful move on of residents from direct access hostel provision.

Option 1: Increase capacity at direct access hostel in order to increase the duration of stay and to enable accommodation of 16/17 year olds. This option is supported by the needs analysis in terms of:

- Level 2 hostels all have much lower throughput, and longer duration of stays, and are able to achieve a higher proportion of successful move on in most cases.
- Service users reported throughout the consultation process that the longer duration of stays afforded to them at Stage 2 hostels enabled them to build relationships of trust with workers in the accommodation, and to address their issues.
- Service users reported that their preference would be for longer stay at The SHIP Hostel – to enable them to stabilise and to give them the security to be able to address their issues.

Option 2: To increase capacity at the second stage of the process, so that an appropriate level of supported move on accommodation is available following a 6 week, focussed stay at the direct access hostel.

Option 3: Work to increase capacity of hostel and supported accommodation by ensuring residents can be successfully moved on to private rented accommodation or other appropriate housing options (with floating support where this is needed) at an earlier stage.

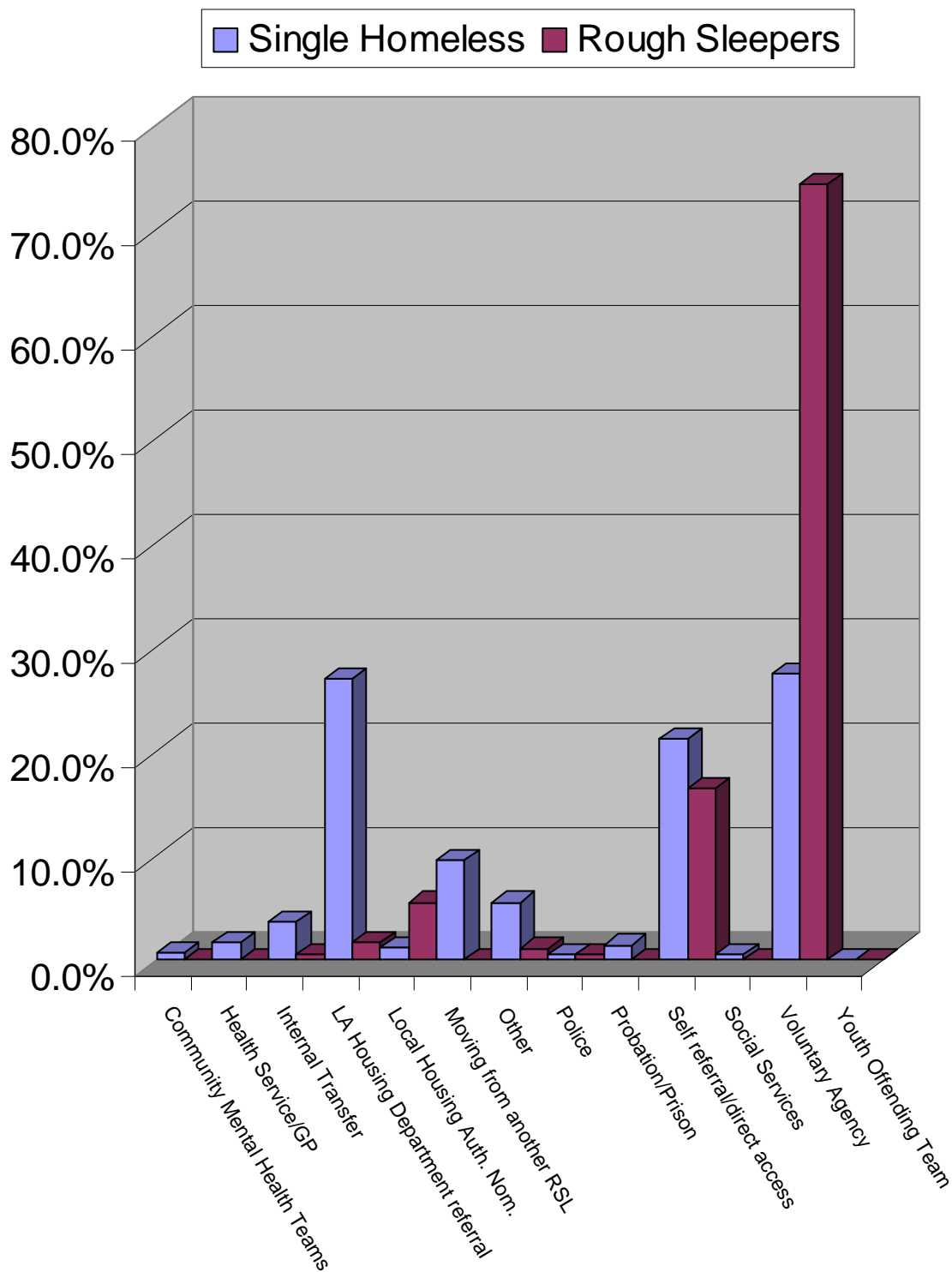
Supporting information regarding the levels of support required

Changing nature of clients: Anecdotal evidence would indicate that the needs of residents accessing the hostels are more complex in terms of mental ill health, substance abuse, history of offending, and anti social behaviours. (*Source: Ship data base; Stakeholder Consultation 13/05/07*).

BME population and use of direct access hostels:

5.23% of total single homeless accessing Supporting People services were of BME origin, but only 1.09 of rough sleepers accessing the night shelter were. (*Source: Supporting People Client Record Data April 2006 – December 2006*).

Source of referrals for all single homeless/rough sleepers (*Source: Supporting People Client Record Data April 2006 – December 2006 – NB Figures apply to all service provision in relation to single homeless, not exclusively the direct access hostel. However, figures in relation to rough sleepers refer exclusively to The Gates*).



The chart illustrates that:

- The majority of referrals to The Gates come from voluntary agencies.
- The Ship take most of their referrals from 3 sources – the Local Authority Housing Department, Self referrals, and voluntary agencies.

This would indicate that there is limited initial awareness of hostel provision by those who access it – with a high degree of signposting required. This means that it is likely that a relative minority (approximately 1 in 5) of residents are the same service users accessing the hostel provision repeatedly.

Outcome focussed delivery of services: Plymouth Supporting People team have adopted the CLG developed outcome monitoring framework, which will enable effectiveness of service delivery to be monitored in relation to 5 outcome domains: Economic Wellbeing; Enjoy and Achieve; Being Healthy; Being Safe; and Civic Participation. As Supporting People is a significant funder of direct access hostel provision – this framework will also be adopted within the new hostel.

Needs highlighted by partners through Plymouth Move On Project in order to assist staff to encourage effective moves towards independence:

- Training and awareness raising regarding issues such as service users who substance abuse, mental health issues, learning disabilities, domestic abuse – in order to be able to identify and effectively support plan and provide ongoing support for people with complex needs.
- Provision of specialist support in relation to these complex needs within hostel.
- Effective provision of information regarding housing options to empower residents and to act as a ‘reality check’ regarding the likelihood of being allocated social housing.

Levels of rough sleeping:

Date	Count
April 27th 06	3
May 30th 06	9
June 29th 06	16
July 27th 06	14
Aug 31st 06	14
Sept 28th 06	14 (End of ‘tent city’)
Oct 31st 06	10
Nov 30th 06	8
Dec 5th 06	3 (Official Count)
Jan 30th 07	6
Feb 27th 07	5
Mar 29th 07	7
Apr 26th 07	5

Numbers reached a high of 17 during 2006, and there have been other notable peaks throughout the course of the year which have received a focussed response from the Rough Sleeper’s Outreach Team in order to achieve reductions.

(Source: Rough Sleepers co-ordinator data base, 2006/07).

Consultation with stakeholders and service users with regard to future Hostel provision in the city:

Consultation process:

- Steering group formed and discussed process of consultation.
- 2 x Paper based stakeholder consultation inviting input into design requirements of hostel, support needs to be met, experience of access etc.
- 2 x Service user focus groups, April 10th: SHIP and Devonport House.
- Stakeholder consultation sessions to discuss detailed requirements on April 13th and April 26th, 2007.

1. Key issues arising from service user consultation.

A full report of the service user feedback received is attached, highlighting the following points:

- o The hostel should be located centrally, close to facilities.
- o Ensure that key workers within hostels are equipped and trained to deal with the wide-ranging needs with which they are presented.
- o There should be clearly distinct night shelter and hostel provision.
- o There should be separate levels/areas within the hostel accommodation, for people at different levels of independence.
- o There should be a separate area for working people, at an affordable rent.
- o There should be facilities that allow people to be more independent, for example a training kitchen.
- o There should be an outdoor area – with a garden
- o More done to ensure that communities engage with hostels – e.g. by having community facilities there, events etc.
- o There should be provision for: couples, people with pets, people who are currently unable to stop abusing substances.
- o More activities and things to do e.g. gardening, sports activities, library, computer, personal development sessions, courses etc.
- o Length of stay in hostel section should be longer than 6 weeks.

2. Key issues arising from stakeholder consultation

Minutes and analysis of surveys from both stakeholder consultation sessions are attached, highlighting the following issues:

A) **ADDRESSING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF NEED WITHIN DISTINCT NIGHT SHELTER AND HOSTEL PROVISION WITHIN THE SAME BUILDING:**

Ground floor to consist of Night Shelter with identified opening hours, and entrance, physical features which clearly identify this as an initial level of service, predominantly to begin working with rough sleepers/more chaotic service users, and working towards achievement of move on to next level of independence within the hostel.

Floor 1 and above to consist of hostel, with more flexible opening hours, and physical features which clearly differentiate this as a 'move on' level of service, with a more structured approach to help residents to address issues and to take the next step towards independence.

B) PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF THE BUILDING:

The following physical aspects of the hostel building were recommended by stakeholders:

- o A readily accessible location.
- o Non-institutional, well-maintained building exterior.
- o Welcoming, non-institutional reception.
- o Domestic style of internal decoration.
- o Domestic style, non-fluorescent lighting in rooms.
- o Effective sound insulation of rooms.
- o Rooms with own thermostat to control heating.
- o Intercom connection to enable reception to contact residents in their rooms.
- o Facilities for TV's in rooms.

Stakeholders also felt that the following features should be incorporated into the design of the hostel:

- o Internal arrangements that would enable the flexible internal division into 'clusters' of 4/5 bedrooms with own bathrooms and kitchens, with swipe card entrance.
- o Individual rooms with locking doors.
- o Rooms for couples.
- o En-suite bathroom and toilet facilities.
- o Communal lounges, small scale and domestic style.
- o Facilities for residents to do their own laundry.
- o Facilities for residents who are able to prepare own snacks and hot drinks at any time.
- o Storage space for possessions.
- o Facilities for people with dogs.

C) OFFICE/SUPPORT FACILITIES:

The following features of the hostel accommodation were considered essential by stakeholders:

- o Training rooms including a kitchen.
- o Adequate office space for staff.
- o Interview/key-work rooms.
- o Rooms to enable multi-agency working (delivery of surgeries etc.)

D) HIGH QUALITY KEY WORKING WITHIN THE HOSTEL:

Stakeholders felt it was essential that staff be trained in identifying specialist support needs including mental health, alcohol, drug problems and learning disabilities, and that access to specialist support for these issues be provided on the premises to support their key-working with individuals.

E) ACCOMMODATION FOR PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT NEEDS:

Stakeholders felt that exclusions and abandonments of tenancies within the hostel could be reduced by ensuring that diverse and sometimes chaotic needs can be dealt with by ensuring that the hostel is designed in such a way to safely accommodate people with diverse needs who may be vulnerable from other residents (or may make other residents vulnerable) by having the potential to:

- o Ensure full disability access.
- o Develop safe spaces for residents and appropriate work with residents who display chaotic behaviour.
- o Access to specialist support for drug, alcohol and mental health problems on the premises.

Stakeholders agreed the following issue was important, but would require further discussion to ensure a joint approach with Children's Services:

- o Removing exclusions and working towards providing age appropriate and sufficient level of support in relation to 16/17 year olds.

Discussion regarding the accommodation within the hostel of residents who continue to abuse substance was inconclusive, and this issue will require further consideration.

Report ends

Applications for capital funding through the 'Places of Change' programme are due to be submitted by 25th January 2008, and Plymouth will make an application for funding.